



Faces of Security Cooperation

GENERAL

JAMES A. VAN FLEET



Van Fleet was a pioneer in International Military Training and Education due to his work in Greece and in Korea.

EDUCATING AND TRAINING FOREIGN MILITARIES

Van Fleet's work in Greece and Korea demonstrate the benefit of training, educating and advising U.S. allies and partner militaries.

In 1947 after World War II ended, Van Fleet was assigned to the U.S. Mission for Aid to Greece, U.S. Army Group as the Commander of the Joint U.S. Military Advisory Group. In that position, he provided operational advice and military advisers to the Hellenic military in their battle with Communist insurgents, which they eventually won.

In 1951, Van Fleet was sent to Korea to command the Eighth U.S. Army and United Nations Forces. He is credited with establishing infantry, artillery and small-unit officer's courses, and retraining the forces in Korea. He also established the Korean military academy and sent Korean officers to military courses in the United States. These actions yielded two results: not only did the United States improve interoperability with Korean forces, Van Fleet also became known as the "Father of South Korea's Army."

BIOGRAPHY

James Alward Van Fleet was born in Coytesville, New Jersey on March 19, 1892.

Van Fleet attended West Point in 1915, with Dwight Eisenhower, with whom he would also serve during World War II. He led troops during the Mexican Revolution against Francisco "Pancho" Villa and when the United States entered World War I, he went to France with the Sixth Division and assumed command of the 17th Machine Gun Battalion.

When World War II began, Van Fleet was commander of the 8th Infantry Regiment of the 4th Infantry Division, a unit he would lead into battle on D-Day. He returned to Europe in 1947 where he was assigned to the U.S. Army Group, a part of the U.S. Mission for Aid to Greece, as Commander of the Joint U.S. Military Advisory Group. Van Fleet was later made Commander of the Eighth U.S. Army and United Nations Forces in Korea in 1951.

Van Fleet retired from the U.S. Army in 1953. President Harry S. Truman summarized his accomplishments by saying, "Gen. Van Fleet is the greatest general we have ever had. I sent him to Greece and he won the war and I send him to Korea and he won the war."

Van Fleet died outside of Polk City, FL on September 23, 1992, six months after his 100th birthday.

ABOUT "FACES OF SECURITY COOPERATION"

September 1st, 2021 marks 50 years since the establishment of DSCA.

In celebration of this milestone, DSCA is highlighting notable "Security Cooperators" who have served the Security Cooperation community over the past 50 years. These individuals, uniformed and civilian, all exemplify professionalism and public service, and embody DSCA's ethos of "security through global partnerships."

"Faces of Security Cooperation" aims to provide a quick glance at the lives and legacies of those who have made impactful change in the history of Security Cooperation. From our past into our future, we honor those whose contributions have shaped DSCA into the agency we know today.

